

Last month, House Republicans failed to bring their surface transportation bill, [H.R. 7](#), to the floor for consideration. While I strongly believe that we need a long-term authorization bill that invests in our transportation infrastructure, H.R. 7 would have been a step backwards. Among my many concerns, it proposed fundamental changes to transit financing that jeopardize the future of our public transportation systems. More broadly, it simply underfunds our transportation network. A wide group of organizations, from the Chambers of Commerce to the World Economic Forum and the American Society of Engineers, have indicated that America's infrastructure is deteriorating and that a significant increase in investment is needed to simply maintain a baseline state of good repair. I will continue to follow progress on this bill and push for necessary improvements.



On February 2, I joined 38 colleagues in a letter to the head of Egypt's ruling military council expressing serious concern about raids on pro-democracy NGOs, including the U.S.-based Freedom House, National Democratic Institute, and International Republican Institute. The letter warned that "the absence of a quick and satisfactory resolution to this issue will make it increasingly difficult for congressional supporters of a strong U.S.-Egypt bilateral relationship to defend current levels of assistance to Egypt." On March 1, the staff from American-backed NGOs were released and allowed to travel outside of Egypt. Though the workers still face politically motivated charges for aiding Egypt's transition to democracy, letting them leave is an important step.

The same day, I joined 20 colleagues in a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressing our opposition to the Administration's sale of arms to Bahrain. The government of Bahrain continues to use excessive force against protestors and deny entry to human rights observers. By moving forward with this arms sale, I believe that the Administration is relinquishing leverage it could use to improve the circumstances in Bahrain.

Also on February 2, I signed on as a co-sponsor of [H.R. 3462](#), which would require prompt payment of education benefits for our veterans. Our commitment to veterans does not end once they return home from battle. This bill would allow require tuition support from the post-9/11 GI bill to be disbursed before tuition payments are due, allowing veterans who receive such educational support to pay tuition on time.

On February 9, I became an original cosponsor of [H.R. 4010](#), the DISCLOSE Act of 2012. The bill would improve the transparency of our federal elections by requiring disclosure of all campaign funding by Super PACS, corporations, outside groups and lobbyists. Corporations

would have to disclose their campaign expenditures to shareholders and all groups would have to explicitly put their name on political advertisements. After the Supreme Court permitted unlimited corporate spending on elections, the DISCLOSE Act would close loopholes in existing disclosure laws that allow corporations and Super PACS to hide their campaign expenditures and donors.



On February 10, I joined almost 50 fellow Members of Congress in sending a letter to Health Secretary Sebelius, supporting the provision of preventative health services (such as cervical cancer screenings, gestational diabetes testing for pregnant women, and contraception) without requiring an insurance co-pay. I strongly believe in a woman's right to have preventative services covered by her employer-provided health insurance, and I will continue to fight to ensure this right is afforded to all women.

On February 17, I voted for [H.R. 3630](#), the Payroll Tax Cut compromise, which passed the House, Senate, and was signed by the President on February 22. This compromise extends the payroll tax cut for 160 million Americans, extends unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and ensures that tens of millions of seniors can continue to see the doctor of their choice under Medicare. The payroll tax cut is extended for the remainder of 2012, providing a typical middle-class family take-home pay increase of \$1,000 over an entire year. The bill also retains the current maximum level (99 weeks) of total Unemployment Insurance benefits through May, reduces the maximum to 79 over the summer, and to 73 in September – depending on a state's unemployment rate.

The original House GOP bill, which I voted against in December 2011, would have cut federal UI benefits by more than half, with the total number of weeks of unemployment insurance down to 59 weeks for most states by the summer, so I believe this is a much better compromise that will support our workers as they still work to find new employment. Each state will be different in terms of how many weeks will be allowed because of each state's variable unemployment rate.

Currently, Massachusetts provides 26 weeks of regular benefits and 47 weeks of EUC (Emergency Unemployment Compensation Tiers 1-3) and 13 weeks of EB (Extended Benefits) for a total of 86 weeks. It is less than the 99 total weeks possible because Massachusetts has had a decrease in its unemployment rate. As May approaches, I will send out an update on what the reduced maximum benefit weeks will mean for Massachusetts unemployed workers.



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